

The Charlotte JEWISH news

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Community Volunteers Unite to Build Shalom Park Playground

By Beth Davis

Nearly 100 community volunteers from all walks of life converged on the JCC on Sunday, September 10th, to build the new playground at Shalom Park. Parents shoveled gravel, poured cement, leveled walkways, twisted bolts, and tightened screws throughout the day. Debby Block, playground

of their contributions today. And we would like to say a special thanks to Paul Jacobs and the maintenance staff for all of their efforts in preparing the playground area to make it ready for our installation day."

Linda Hindel, playground committee member, made sure that all volunteers were well fed in order to insure their top notch performance. A breakfast of bagels and

notice that plans include a drinking fountain for the playground, something parents and thirsty children have been asking for. "We are thankful for this anonymous donation," said Debby Block, "and thrilled that so many families want to get involved in the playground improvement project. We can truly say it is our playground."

The new playstructure was initiated by an extremely generous grant from an anonymous donor. This grant was matched by the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte management committee, and addi-



An army of workers turned out.

committee chairperson said, "We want to say a special thanks to all the volunteers who came and worked so hard today. Everyone's time and effort are appreciated in making this beautiful playground a reality."

Paul Ruschmeyer, Supervisor and Playground Specialist from Playground Environments, was highly complementary of the over 400 hours of labor provided by the volunteers. "Everyone here can take credit for making this happen," he said. Herm Zeigler, volunteer coordinator, agreed, "the volunteers were here early and ready to work. Their dedication showed how important they feel this playground is."

Alan Feldman, JCC Executive Director, noted that many groups within Charlotte's Jewish Community were represented including JCC members, members of both Temples, Charlotte Jewish Preschool teachers and parents, Boy Scouts, and many others. "We couldn't have done it without each

cream cheese was donated by Mike Sinsheimer and Essex Street Bagel Exchange. The volunteers also enjoyed pizza out by the playground personally prepared by Rikki Segal at Riccio's Restaurant.

All of the participating parents look forward to many happy hours spent at the new playground. "It's just beautiful, with all of the fun new things to do and the interesting places to play, like the storefront under the tallest tower. The kids will love it!" said Anita Biederman, playground committee member. The playstructure will include 3 slides, a clatterbridge, tire-swing, a variety of climbers, and talk phones. It is designed to be handicapped accessible and fun for children with special needs by including handicapped accessible stairs, a transfer station and a wheel chair ramp. The volunteers spent many hours spreading "Wood carpet," a ground cover which is also wheel chair accessible.

The playground committee was particularly pleased to an-



Herm Ziegler and Peter Hindel keep the playground installation on the level.

tional funds were donated by the Charlotte Jewish Preschool PTO (a joint venture of Temple Beth El and Temple Israel), the "Special Children's Fund" of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, the Jewish Community Center, and other individual donors.

The project, launched more than 9 months ago, has been spearheaded by a committee of dedicated volunteers. Their work included personal interviews with six leading playground construction companies (both local and national), extensive checking of vendor references (including playing on many different playgrounds) and, finally, choosing the appropriate playground contractor for Shalom Park.

And to those hardy souls who stuck it out all day - we salute you.

Who Will Be Giving to What?

American Jewish Life in 50 Years

By Yosef I. Abramowitz

"The European notion of a uniform, all-controlling kehillah (community) cannot strike root in American soil because it is not in consonance with the free and voluntary character of American religious, social, educational and philanthropic enterprises. The only power that the kehillah can exercise is moral and spiritual in its nature." Rabbi Judah Magnes, 1918

"The organized Jewish community is in the process of self-destructing," says Dr. Sidney Schwarz, president of the Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values. "Although I bemoan this, centralized fund raising will be a thing of the past in 50 years, probably sooner."

Not everyone is as pessimistic as Schwarz, but it is difficult to find anyone who thinks the UJA/Federation annual campaign is going to increase with time. "To raise over \$725 million dollars is nothing to be ashamed of," says Marvin Lender, who admits that factors such as intermarriage have affected the lack of growth in the annual campaign. But Lender, the former UJA chairman and president, hopes that this "has bottomed out and that we will find new ways to reach out

to the younger generation. We are the wealthiest Jewish community in the history of the world, and we still have close to 900,000 contributors." These contributors, however, are generally older. And half the time that they go to their children's weddings, they are welcoming a non-Jew into the family.

According to most predictions, the majority of American Jewish households will be interfaith families in 50 years. If their giving trends will mirror those of today's intermarrieds, then little money will be raised for Jewish institutions and causes. According to Dr. Gary Tobin, director of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, "Intermarried households are far less likely to contribute to Jewish philanthropies than are in-married households." According to the 1990 CJF National Jewish Population Survey, only 27% of mixed households contribute to Jewish causes and only 13% percent donate to UJA/Federation as opposed Jewish couples of whom 74% give to Jewish charities and 59% to UJA/Federation.

"The future of fund raising depends partly on the Jewish community's ability to build the broadest base possible, including intermarried couples," says Tobin. Failure to do so, he warns, means declining revenues for the 250 national Jewish organizations and this can seriously compromise human services and erode the community as we know it today.

Emptier communal coffers will come at a time when two issues will

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Team Charlotte Successful in Maccabi Youth Games



Twenty nine young athletes from the Charlotte community participated in the Regional JCC 'Maccabi Youth Games in Orlando Florida. These athletes took part in four days of athletic competition and social activities designed to maintain and enrich their Jewish identity.

Team Charlotte's athletes had a very successful trip. The boys 15 & 16 basketball team brought home the silver medal. Team members were Joe Fuerstman, Derek Hoffman, Jason Kaplan, Austin Karp, Ben Levine, Brad Nathanson, and Matt Shapiro.

Tennis player David Sheffer took a silver medal in the 12 - 14 Boys Division and a gold medal in the 15 & 16 Boys Doubles. Corey Goldfarb also received a silver medal in the 15 & 16 Boys Bowling.

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By Resa Goldberg